

Item	Title	Actions
1.0	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted and introductions made.	
2.0	Schools Forum Membership	
2.1	<p>Following recent elections, the successful candidates are listed below:</p> <p>Dan Cohen re-elected for the Jewish Schools Nick Tones newly elected and representing the Schools JCCs Christopher Thornton (Director of Inclusive Provision and SEND, Leeds City College) newly elected representing 16-19 Providers</p> <p>Primary Heads x four vacancies Peter Harris and John Hutchinson re-elected Rebecca White, Sharp Lane Primary newly elected One vacancy remains</p> <p>Primary Governors x four vacancies John Garvani and Dave Kagai re-elected Victoria Walker, St Margaret’s Horsforth C of E and Stratis Koutsoukos, St Nicholas Catholic primary, both newly elected.</p> <p>Academies x two vacancies Dave Gurney re-elected Simon Prinsep, Abbey Grange Church of England academy newly elected</p> <p>Secondary Governors x one vacancy Dave Webster re-elected</p> <p>Alternative Academy x one vacancy This has been vacant since 2020. Numerous attempts have been made to fill the post but sadly failed.</p> <p>Election of Chair Peter Harris agreed to Chair the meeting for a further year.</p>	
3.0	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
3.1	June meeting: The minutes were agreed subject to the amendment at item 2.8. See Matters Arising.	
3.2	July’s meeting: The minutes were agreed.	
4.0	Matters Arising	
4.1	<u>June’s meeting</u>	
4.1.1	<i>Page Two, Item 2.2:</i> to be amended to read that the new Director of Education for the Diocese is Kieron Flood.	
4.1.2	<i>Page 5, Item 6.2 – base rate funding for Early Years:</i> The change in rate was communicated to providers earlier in the year.	

	<p><i>Additional £6k funding blocks:</i> This is a national requirement and currently a local decision. However it could be overtaken by the new national standard funding formula.</p> <p>Action: details of how the formula works to be circulated to Forum members.</p>	LH
4.2	July's meeting:	
4.2.1	<i>Page Two, item 2.8 High Needs Supplementary Grant:</i> The paper referred to came from Claire Swift and was called Budget Essentials 22/23 Assumptions. There has been no indication that the funding for the levy and wider costs will be withdrawn or claimed back. The supplementary grant will be embedded in the main budget next year.	
4.2.2	<i>Page Two, item 2.9:</i> It was reiterated that there was a clear disappointment in the way the paper had been put together and as a result an offer was made that officers would reflect on the comments made and possibly look at making amendments. The follow up meeting which has not happened will be rescheduled and apologies were given for the delay in organising this.	
4.2.3	Due to the complexity of the Council's decision making and vagaries of the legalistic and democratic process takes some time in understanding and taking a decision of this nature. It was acknowledged at the meeting that this was a Council decision to make. The link to the supplementary funding decision on the Council website can be found here Council and democracy (leeds.gov.uk) It provides the report and some of the key dates in the decision making process. The first date at which the decision can be implemented is 20 October. It would be useful for the Forum to receive a further report at a future meeting.	
	Action: To pick up and schedule at either the November or January meeting.	TP
4.2.4	There was a proposal to move from FFI funding to a set amount (£10k+). An email received by SILC Principals advises that this will not now be the case. This does create a significant financial change in budgets. Part of the mitigations around that is the decision to backdate the increase in FFI rate to 1 April 2022. The reason for moving away from the £10k rate is a government proposal to change the system again and, in an attempt, to provide some certainty it was thought prudent not to make a change only to have to make a second change so soon afterwards.	
4.2.5	Officers have met with the DfE and relayed all the concerns Leeds has as a city. The information received was that before the end of 2022 there will be more information around SEND Green Paper and the implementation plan. The DfE did say that not all the recommendations in the Green Paper would go through but at this point they were unable to provide more details.	
5.0	DSG Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-24	
5.1	The paper outlines the projection of the DSG for the next five years. Along with other local authorities Leeds continues to be capped. Since 2018-19 Leeds has been capped by £32.3m of which £22m is against the High Needs block. A further cap of £1.86m will apply to the High Needs block in 2023-24. Within this both the Schools block and Early Years block are expected to balance over this period. There is a small pressure against the Central Schools Services block (CSSB) due to the reduction of historic council expenditure.	
5.2	National trends indicate a projected overspend in the High Needs block between £700k and £17.7m each year. Table two in the report shows that this will lead to a projected deficit of £48.4m by 2027-28. If Schools Forum continue to support a transfer of 0.5% from the Schools block to the High Needs block the deficit could reduce to £31.1m.	

5.3	<u>Key Risks</u>	
5.3.1	The National Send review introduced in March 2022 identified key challenges facing SEND and alternative provision systems. The public consultation on the review ended in July and results of the White Paper are being waited for. This may have significant impact on projections within High Needs.	
5.3.2	As well as the review there is a new area of SEND inspection to come into operation from early next year. Consultation has taken place on the framework and a response is still to be produced. This again could have an impact.	
5.3.3	Funding increases: indicative funding announcements have been made for 2023-24 but there are no allocations beyond that. Earlier this year there was an indication that it would be 3% year on year and this was used on projected figures. It is worth noting that every 1% increase equates to £1m in the High Needs block.	
5.3.4	Cap on gains continues for 2023-24 of £1.8m. Leeds is one of 30 local authorities who remain to be capped.	
5.3.5	High Needs demands and complexities again in line with the national trend there is an increase in demand. The current projections are based on current population data and trends.	
5.3.6	Funding to High Needs settings: The FFI rate will increase to £672 for mainstream settings and £708 for special schools. The High Needs operational guide has set the minimum funding guarantee for special schools at 3%.	
5.3.7	Since 2017-18 £15.8m has been transferred from DSG blocks to the High Needs block. It is not known whether this will be allowed to continue beyond 2023-24. The DfE have indicated that this will be more limited going forward.	
5.3.8	A request was made that all special schools be considered within the 3% minimum funding guarantee.	
5.4	<u>DSG Savings Plan</u> In 2020 the Government introduced a statutory override separating the local authority finances from the DSG deficit. The override is due to end at the end of 2022-23 however there has been consultation to extend this. Local authorities must continue to work the DfE to manage any deficits.	
5.5	Schools forum noted the comments made in the report.	
6.0	DSB Budget Monitoring 2022-23	
6.1	The latest position in 2022-23 for the DSG as at the end of August 2022 highlights an in year underspend of £1.59m .	
6.2	<u>Schools Block</u> Mainly allocated to Primary and Secndary schools and is projecting an overall underspend of £297k. The majority of this is against the growth fund with the de-delegated budget projecting an underspend of £14k.	
6.3	<u>Early Years Block</u>	

6.4	<p>A small projected overspend of £14k. It should be noted that at this time of year it is difficult to provide an accurate figure for the full year. Presently showing an overspend on SEN inclusion fund and overspend on disability access fund which reflects previous years. For 2022-23 the full increase was passported to providers: 8p per hour for two-year olds and the base rate for three to four year olds was increased to £4.78 per hour. Budget realignment will be looked at if these trends continue in future years.</p>	
6.4.1	<p><u>High Needs Block</u> An in-year projected underspend of £1.3m is forecast. There is an assumption of the use of the supplementary funding and the £3.1m transfer from the Schools block. Key variances to note are the out of hour and external residential placements currently projecting an overspend of £801k. This figure may change.</p>	
6.4.2	<p>SEN top ups to institutions sees an overspend of £772k, mainly due to top ups to mainstream schools. A further impact is an overspend for additional £6k blocks of £403k.</p>	
6.4.3	<p>Across all the services provided by Children and Families there is a projected underspend of £821k. This is due to vacant posts and delays in recruitment. The budget assumed an increase in special needs places. The majority of these have remained in mainstream.</p>	
6.3.5	<p>The budget assumes that the projected £947k high needs supplementary funding will not be spent this year. It was commented that it is very difficult to make a case for not having enough funding if the funds already available have not being spent. Schools are struggling and if it is widely known about this surplus it will raise concerns with Heads.</p>	
6.3.6	<p>There have been some hiccups with recruitment but not necessarily because the right people have not been recruited. It was more about going through the process. It can be long and drawn out going through the complete recruitment process. The unions requested that recruitment did not progress until after the summer break as there were many colleagues on leave. A meeting tomorrow will hopefully result in being able to move forward.</p>	
6.3.7	<p>Invest to Save and High Needs Block transfer: An acknowledgement of the work the team has done to try and come up with projections for the High Needs Block spend. Come through a period of many years where the High Needs block has projected a deficit and it would be useful to give this time to settle and see what actual happens to the £3.1m projection. There is some nervousness about projecting a surplus on the High Needs block due to experience in previous years. It is acknowledged that schools may not be disposed to look favourably on a similar request next year. This is a very complicating and rapidly changing picture.</p>	
6.3.8	<p>In terms of some of figures and projections it is known that EHCPs are rising significantly with a 118% rise in Leeds. One effect on the figures is the difficult in terms of admin support in SENSAP. This has resulted in many new requests not being processed as quickly as they should be. These have not been considered in the projection. In August there were 5031 requests against a figure of 270+ in 2016. Of the new requests currently not being processed 50% will turn into EHCPs.</p>	
6.3.9	<p>Leeds is still below the over-arching figures across the country by about 1%. Of those 50% are going to specialist schools and 50% to mainstream.</p>	
6.3.		

6.4	In terms of the £1.3m comments made are absolutely right and this is a huge figure but in terms of high needs projections that is just 1% to take into account the revised projections and does need sensitivity analysis and a period to settle down. By the same token it is noted that £10k provided to schools can do a lot.	
6.5	<u>Central Schools Services Block</u> There is a minor underspend of 3k against admin services.	
6.5.1	<u>2020-21 Reserves</u>	
6.5.2	The projected DSG reserves underspend shows a general surplus of £618k and a delegated surplus of £1.1m.	
6.5.3	The January 2022 report with details about services funded through the central school services block is here Report of (leeds.gov.uk) . School Forum noted the contents of the report.	
7.0	School Funding Update 2023-24	
7.1	The update outlines the indicative funding for 2023-24 and considers changes to the funding formula and the increment in schools funding consultation. The ESFA have recently published the illustrative funding allocation for next year which is based on the October 2021 pupil census data. The final allocations will be confirmed in December and will consider the October 2022 pupil data. For 2023-24 the basic structure of the funding formula is not changing.	
7.2	The ESFA has confirmed that it will continue to move towards implementing a direct national funding formula.	
7.3	<u>Schools Block</u>	
7.3.1	In December last year the supplementary schools grant was £18m+ for Leeds. The indicative allocation for 2023-24 is £652m, an increase of £12.97m.	
7.3.2	Key changes include the schools business rates and the intention by the ESFA to pay these directly to billing local authorities. Due to technical issues this was unable to happen this year so it is proposed that for 2023-24 schools will continue to be billed directly.	
7.3.3	The transfer of 0.5% (£3.26m) from the Schools block can continue. Consultation to transfer 0.5% will take place.	
7.3.4	The minimum funding guarantee will continue at a rate of 0-0.5%. The minimum per pupil funding will increase to £5,715 for secondary and £4,405 for primary schools. It is proposed to continue to move closer to the national funding formula	
7.3.5	Formula Factors: the main factors will be increased by 2.4% and deprivation factors will see an increase of 4.3%.	
7.3.6	Growth Fund: allocation will not be confirmed until December 2022. Actions: consultation report to be brought back to next month's Forum meeting. Provide historic information from the last couple of years in terms of numbers of places on national offer day.	LMc TP
7.4	<u>High Needs Block</u>	

7.4.1	The indicative allocation for 2023-24 is £121.8m. This represents an increase of £7.9m from 2022-23. Leeds continues to be capped at £1.86m for 23-24 and the High Needs Operational Guide has been published. It sets a minimum funding guarantee of 3%.	
7.5	<u>Central Schools Services Block</u> The indicative allocation is £5m with a decrease of £96k compared to 2022-23. This reflects the continued reduction in historic commitments.	
7.6	<u>Early Years Block</u> The figure has not been released yet.	
7.7	<u>De-delegation of Services</u> Schools Forum can agree funding for some essential services for maintained schools and schools will be consulted on this in the Autumn term. The outcome of the consultation will be brought to the November Schools Forum.	
7.8	Schools Forum noted the contents of the report.	
8.0	The Vine Disapplication request	
8.1	The Executive Board has approved a business case to rebuild the Vine education centre and support is sought from the Forum to ask the ESFA for a disapplication request. The Council has borrowed money on behalf of the DSG on the basis that it will cost more for external placements if the rebuild does not happen.	
8.2	The business case can be found here . As part of the Council's governance process the business case has been through several layers of challenges eg the Executive Board and finance.	
8.3	Members of the Forum were given an opportunity to speak against the proposal on two occasions.	
8.4	Schools Forum unanimously supported the disapplication request.	
9.0	Any Other Business	
9.1	<u>Schools in financial difficulty panel</u> Details will be fed back following the DSG Board meeting.	
10.0	Meeting Dates for 22-23 and Forward Plan	
	The next meeting will take place via MS Teams on Thursday 17 November 1630-1830	